

## **AMENDMENTS**

### **In the Claims**

The following is a marked-up version of the claims with the language that is underlined (“\_\_\_”) being added and the language that contains strikethrough (“—”) being deleted:

1. (Currently Amended) A communication method ~~comprising the steps of:~~  
comprising:  
receiving an instant messaging (IM) message from a first ~~sender~~ user to a ~~first recipient;~~  
second user; and  
prompting the first ~~sender~~ user for permission to convey the IM message to ~~the second~~  
~~recipient;~~ a third user;  
determining whether the second user is currently engaged in an IM chat session with a  
fourth user; and  
indicating to the first user, in response to determining that the second user is engaged in  
an IM chat session with a fourth user, that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session  
with the fourth user.
2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further ~~comprising the step of:~~  
comprising:  
receiving an input from the first ~~sender,~~ user, the input being indicative of the permission  
to convey the IM message to the ~~second recipient;~~ third user; and  
conveying the IM message to the ~~second recipient~~ third user in response to receiving the  
input.
3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2, further ~~comprising the step of:~~  
comprising:

indicating to the first ~~sender~~ user that the IM message is being conveyed to the ~~second recipient~~ third user.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2, further ~~comprising the step of:~~  
comprising:

indicating to the ~~second recipient~~ third user that the IM message originated from the first ~~sender~~ user.

5. (Canceled)

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further ~~comprising the step of:~~  
comprising:

waiting a predefined time interval prior to requesting prompting the first ~~sender~~ user for permission.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6, further ~~comprising the step of:~~  
comprising:

indicating to the first ~~sender~~ user, in the absence of a response from the ~~first recipient~~ second user during the predefined time interval, that the ~~first recipient~~ second user is unavailable.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6, wherein ~~the step of~~ requesting permission from the first ~~sender~~ user is responsive to an absence of an input from the ~~first recipient~~ second user during the predefined time interval.

9. (Currently Amended) A communication method ~~comprising the steps of:~~

comprising:

receiving an instant messaging (IM) message from a first ~~sender~~ user to a ~~first recipient;~~  
and second user;

conveying the IM message to a ~~second recipient;~~ third user;

determining whether the second user is currently engaged in an IM chat session with a  
fourth user; and

indicating to the first user, in response to determining that the second user is engaged in  
an IM chat session with a fourth user, that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session  
with the fourth user.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 9, further ~~comprising the step of:~~  
comprising:

indicating to the first ~~sender~~ user that the IM message is being conveyed to the ~~second~~  
~~recipient;~~ third user.

11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 9, further ~~comprising the step of:~~  
comprising:

indicating to the ~~second recipient~~ third user that the IM message originated from the first  
~~sender;~~ user.

12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 12, further ~~comprising the step of:~~  
comprising:

further indicating to the first ~~sender,~~ user, in response to determining that the first  
recipient is engaged in an IM chat session with a ~~second sender,~~ fourth user, that an IM chat

session is being established between the first ~~sender~~ user and the ~~second recipient~~, third user.

14. (Currently Amended) A communication system comprising:  
receive logic configured to receive an instant messaging (IM) message from a first ~~sender~~ user to a ~~first recipient~~, second user; and  
prompting logic configured to prompt the first ~~sender~~ user for permission to convey the IM message to ~~the second recipient~~, a third user;  
determining logic configured to determine whether the second user is currently engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user; and  
indicating to the first user, in response to determining that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user, that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with the fourth user.

15. (Currently Amended) A communication system comprising:  
means for receiving an instant messaging (IM) message from a first ~~sender~~ user to a ~~first recipient~~, second user; and  
means for prompting the first ~~sender~~ user for permission to convey the IM message to ~~the second recipient~~, a third user;  
means for determining whether the second user is currently engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user; and  
means for indicating to the first user, in response to determining that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user, that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with the fourth user.

16. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium comprising:  
computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to receive an

instant messaging (IM) message from a first ~~sender~~ user to a ~~first recipient;~~ second user; and  
computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to prompt the first  
~~sender~~ user for permission to convey the IM message to ~~the second recipient;~~ a third user;  
computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to determine  
whether the second user is currently engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user; and  
computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to indicate to the  
first user, in response to determining that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with  
a fourth user, that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with the fourth user.

17. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable medium of claim 16, further  
comprising:  
computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to receive an input  
from the first ~~sender;~~ user, the input being indicative of the permission to convey the IM  
message to the ~~second sender;~~ fourth user; and  
computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to convey the IM  
message to the ~~second recipient~~ third user in response to receiving input from the first ~~sender;~~  
user.

18. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable medium of claim 17, further  
comprising:  
computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to indicate to the  
first ~~sender~~ user that the IM message is being conveyed to the ~~second recipient;~~ third user.

19. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable medium of claim 17, further  
comprising:  
computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to indicate to the

~~second recipient~~ third user that the IM message originated from the first ~~sender~~. user.

20. (Canceled)

21. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable medium of claim 16, further comprising:

computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to wait a predefined time interval prior to requesting the input from the first ~~sender~~. user.

22. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable medium of claim 21, further comprising:

computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to indicate to the first ~~sender~~, user, in the absence of a response from the ~~first recipient~~ second user during the predefined time interval, that the ~~first recipient~~ second user is unavailable.

23. (Currently Amended) A communication system comprising:  
receive logic configured to receive an instant messaging (IM) message from a first ~~sender~~ user to a ~~first recipient~~; second user; and

conveying logic configured to convey the IM message to a ~~second recipient~~; third user;  
determining logic configured to determine whether the second user is currently engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user; and

indicating logic configured to indicate to the first user, in response to determining that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user, that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with the fourth user.

24. (Currently Amended) A communication system comprising:

means for receiving an instant messaging (IM) message from a first ~~sender~~ user to a ~~first recipient;~~ second user; and

means for conveying the IM message to a ~~second recipient;~~ third user;

means for determining whether the second user is currently engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user; and

means for indicating to the first user, in response to determining that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user, that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with the fourth user.

25. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium comprising:  
computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to receive an instant messaging (IM) message from a first ~~sender~~ user to a ~~first recipient;~~ second user; and  
computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to convey the IM message to a ~~second recipient;~~ third user;

computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to determine whether the second user is currently engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user; and

computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to indicate to the first user, in response to determining that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user, that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with the fourth user.

26. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable medium of claim 25, further comprising:

computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to indicate to the first ~~sender~~ user that the IM message is being conveyed to the ~~second recipient;~~ third user.

27. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable medium of claim 25, further

comprising:

computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to indicate to the ~~second recipient~~ third user that the IM message originated from the first ~~sender, user.~~

28. (Canceled)

29. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable medium of ~~claim 28,~~ claim 25, further comprising:

computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to further indicate to the first ~~sender, user,~~ in response to determining that the ~~first recipient~~ second user is engaged in an IM chat session with a ~~second sender,~~ fourth user that an IM chat session is being established between the first sender and the ~~second recipient,~~ third user.